

By: Barrientos

S.C.R. No. 15

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CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Legislature of the State of Texas takes pleasure in recognizing the Texas Juvenile Justice System and in declaring February 27 Texas Juvenile Justice Day 2003; and

WHEREAS, The State of Texas and county governments are partners in providing one of the most progressive juvenile justice systems in the nation; and

WHEREAS, The Texas Juvenile Justice System is composed of 169 community-based probation departments, which serve youths and families in all 254 counties in the state; the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, which provides oversight for the probation departments; and the Texas Youth Commission, which provides institutional programs and services to high-risk juvenile offenders; and

WHEREAS, The Texas Legislature extensively studied and analyzed the juvenile justice system and in 1995 made sweeping reforms that provided for greater accountability for offenders, broader options for the prosecution of juvenile offenders, increased public safety, focused prevention and early intervention programs, and increased funding for the entire juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, With increased resources and guidelines, juvenile justice system professionals are able to make a positive difference in the lives of many troubled Texas youths and their

1 families; and

2 WHEREAS, The reforms that began in 1995 have produced
3 dramatic results; between 1995 and 2001, the juvenile-age
4 population has increased 15.2 percent; however, referrals of youths
5 to the juvenile justice system decreased by 15.4 percent, arrests
6 decreased by 21.4 percent, violent arrests decreased by 41.3
7 percent, and referrals to the Texas Youth Commission decreased
8 significantly; and

9 WHEREAS, Statistics show that the State of Texas has avoided
10 millions of dollars in correctional costs because of the effective
11 use of probation services and rehabilitative programs that reduce
12 the number of referrals to the juvenile justice system; and

13 WHEREAS, The juvenile probation departments handle 98
14 percent of the referrals of youths to the juvenile justice system
15 each year through the efforts of 2,502 certified juvenile probation
16 officers, 2,695 certified detention officers, and 1,951 certified
17 corrections officers; and

18 WHEREAS, The dedicated probation, detention, and corrections
19 officers are represented by the Juvenile Justice Association of
20 Texas, whose mission is to promote advocacy for Texas children by
21 providing quality juvenile services through professional
22 development, leadership, education, and training; and

23 WHEREAS, The persons who enter the field of juvenile justice
24 accept a great responsibility to the youths and families of Texas;
25 they work tirelessly and courageously to rehabilitate the lives of
26 troubled youths and maintain the security and safety of our
27 states's communities; now, therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas
2 hereby commend the outstanding professionals of our juvenile
3 justice system for their vital contributions to the citizens of
4 this state and extend sincere appreciation to them on Texas
5 Juvenile Justice Day 2003; and, be it further

6 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be prepared in their
7 honor and as an expression of high regard from the Texas
8 Legislature.